# Sidwell Helps Liberty County, Ga., Meet GIS Needs

Liberty County, a small county located outside of Savannah, Ga., upgraded their mapping system in 2007 and continues to extend the use of their countywide GIS. Liberty County entered the GIS world with new orthophotography and conversion of their existing hard copy tax maps. The data was structured and delivered in an Esri® Geodatabase as a standard polygon-on-polygon cadastral data model.

Liberty County has the ability to deploy property, tax and GIS data through a convenient map-centric interface.

The Challenge

The county GIS manager, after working with the new GIS data, realized there were limitations in its use. Although a maintenance workflow was in place, it became increasingly apparent that it was not efficient. The two-person GIS staff had to devote so much time to maintenance that they had little time to allocate to other GIS work. They were often unable to fulfill data and analysis requests from other departments.

Although GIS provides a pathway to increasing use of digital data, there is still a need for hardcopy output, especially a set of standardized parcel maps. It was determined that the GIS lacked the cartographic features necessary for hardcopy map production. It was further determined that there was a need for a parcel number management system to track parcels and genealogy, to support growth in the area.
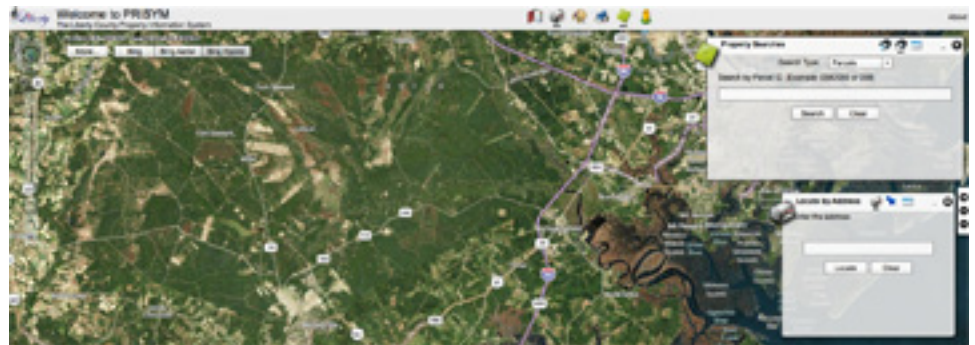
The Solution

Working through a referral by a business partner, Liberty County contacted Sidwell to gather information and functional details for a third-party solution that would enable them to efficiently maintain their new cadastral GIS. Sidwell's Parcel Builder™ is a productivity extension to Esri's ArcGIS® Desktop software that empowers users to streamline parcel maintenance activities. The county purchased several copies of Sidwell's Parcel Builder, along with on-site training.

During the initial on-site training sessions, Sidwell's project manager worked closely with Liberty County staff on the installation and configuration of Parcel Builder. With four modules, Parcel Builder is an effective tool for managing a jurisdiction's parcel number inventory, defining and using task-oriented workflows, and generating hardcopy

output. While Parcel Builder works with various cadastral data models, it offers additional functionality when coupled with Sidwell's innovative Coincident Boundary Model. (http://www.sidwellco.com/gis-services/gis-design/coincident-boundary-model/)

Sidwell's Coincident Boundary Model is used specifically for maintaining cadastral (parcel) data in an Esri geodatabase. Cadastral data is unique in that multiple features can occupy the same geographic location (i.e. coincident boundaries). This data model leverages a linear-based structure for efficient entry and processing of land records information. Use of this model allows for expedient maintenance of multiple data layers, ensuring that data is consistent and current. Users can quickly create, update, and review the multiple cadastral features on

individual geographic features, or for the entire countywide dataset.

It was during the initial on-site sessions that the county learned about the additional functionality gained by using Sidwell's Coincident Boundary Model in conjunction with Parcel Builder. When they realized the advantages of working with the model, Liberty County decided to switch from its current data model to Sidwell's Coincident Boundary Model.

Working with county staff, the Sidwell project manager set aside a small portion of the on-site hours to configure and train staff to convert their brand new cadastral data into the coincident boundary model design. Taking the initiative, county staff converted their entire cadastral geodatabase within a matter of days. At the beginning of the next training session, Sidwell's project manager reviewed and checked the conversion work performed by the county. When the data in the new model checked clean, the remaining training took place, leveraging the power and additional efficiencies garnered when using Parcel Builder with the coincident boundary model.

The Results

Parcel Builder proved to be the solution to the county's needs. MapEditor provides the solution to efficient maintenance of the cadastral GIS, which is the foundation of all the county's GIS efforts. The decision to implement the Coincident Boundary Model was the key factor in this process. Administrator solves the problem of effectively creating, retiring, and assigning parcel numbers. This allows the county to better manage growth. They also leveraged Genealogy to implement a long-wished-for means to track the history of parcel numbers.

The need for standardized hard-copy parcel maps was solved with MapPlotter, which allows them to easily create a parcel map template for fast, consistent creation of parcel map books. Full implementation of Parcel Builder, in conjunction with the Coincident Boundary Model, has yielded significant efficiencies in their cadastral maintenance efforts, thus freeing staff time for other GIS activities.

Extending the Use of GIS

To support the increasing need and use of their GIS investment, Liberty County upgraded their GIS implementation to Esri's ArcGIS 10 and to Sidwell's newest release of Parcel Builder v.4. This keeps Liberty County at the cutting edge of GIS technology, and the GIS staff is able to support the growing GIS needs of the county.

In an effort to better support the needs of the county and provide real-time data and services to the citizens of Liberty County, GIS staff started to develop a GIS-centric data viewer for assessment and property tax information. Using the new functionality of the recently upgraded GIS platform, GIS staff called upon Sidwell to further define, build and deploy a fully functional GIS viewer with multiple criteria property look-up, property record cards, photos, sketches and links to the county's tax payment website.

Leveraging some work completed by the county GIS staff, Sidwell worked with Esri's ArcGIS Server FLEX API to extend and complete the GIS-centric viewer to replace older data search functionality. Nick-named PRISYM, Liberty County has the ability to deploy property, tax and GIS data through a convenient map-centric interface.

For a closer look at Liberty County's PRISYM, visit http://gis.libertycountyga.com/flex2/index.html Or for more information about Sidwell you can go to www.sidwell.com or their website can be accessed through the TEAM website at http://www.teamconsulting.cc/about/businesspartners.html. ❖
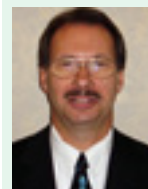
An International Visitor

By Rick Stuart, CAE

Varnavas "Varny" Pashoulis was a student in the IAAO 402–Tax Policy class held in Olathe, Kan., in August that I instructed. A land valuation officer in Cyprus, Varny was on a fact-finding mission in the United States. It was very interesting to have Varny in class as he knew international tax policy and was very versed in U.S. policies. I asked Varny a series of questions for the newsletter and his responses are shown below.

Rick: What is your title?
Varny: My title is senior land valuation officer in the Lands and Surveys Department under the Ministry of Interior. My responsibility covers the valuation of the Eminent Domain, the general valuation for the island, as well as advising all the government departments in regard to immovable property valuations for any purpose.

Rick: Why the trip to the U.S.?
Varny: The trip to the U.S. is a scholarship granted by the U.S. government, so-called AMIDEAST-Cyprus America Scholarship Program, and the subject of the scholarship is focused on Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal Systems. The program was tailor-made in cooperation with AMIDEAST so as to cover both a number of trainings and site visits in [U.S.] counties in order to gain some hands-on experience of the business processes in mass appraisals.

Rick: When was the last reappraisal and your role in preparing for the next one?
Varny: The last reappraisal in Cyprus dates back to January 1, 1980. New improvements are updated on 1980 prices, though. At present, under my role as a valuation head, I have the authority and responsibility to implement (planning, organizing, staffing, leading and controlling the project) a new reappraisal, after the political decision [that] has to be taken by the Council of Ministers.

Rick: Where in the U.S. have you visited?
Varny: In brief, I had a three days' training in Chicago on Mass Appraisals by Robert Gloudemans and Richard Almy. Then, I had a five-day IAAO course on Property Tax Policy in Kansas presented by Rick Stuart, and had another five days of visits to the counties of Johnson, Kan.; Clay, Mo.; Jackson, Mo.; Miami, Kan.; Platte, Kan.; and Wyandotte, Kan.

Also, I have visited the IAAO headquarters [in Kansas City, Mo.] in order to be informed of the role and the activities that are undertaken by this association and the possibility to cooperate with my department. I met with Lisa Daniels, the executive director of IAAO, and discussed various issues of common interest as regard our

Varnavas "Varny" Pashoulis and Rick Stuart.

organizations and the profession.

Then I continued my site visits in North Carolina for another five days. I visited Durham County for two days, and have also been introduced to Kenneth Joyner, who would have taught the IAAO Course 400 in Assessment Administration, but it was postponed. I have also visited the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, the John Smith Analytical Consultants, the Halifax County at Virginia State and the North Carolina Department of Revenue.

Finally, my training has ended up in Colorado, by participating in the five-day course in Fundamentals of Modeling with SPSS, presented by Class Roster of the training organization Thimgan & Associates.

Rick: What parts of the country and what offices did you enjoy most?
Varny: I enjoyed all parts of my visits to various states, because each state has its own character, uniqueness and offered [a] different experience. Out of all, I enjoyed more the people I met in different states, because they were very friendly, kind and supportive during my stay. Also, in terms of the actual business processes performed in the appraisal offices at different counties and States, my observation is that appraisal offices work in a rather similar way, although different laws apply in each state. The same observation is valid when comparing small to large counties.

Rick: What is some basic information about your country?
Varny: Cyprus Republic is an island country in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, located at the crossroads between three continents: Europe, Africa and Asia. It is an independent nation since 1960, a member of the European Union since 2004 and part of the Euro zone currency. About 34% of the territory of the Republic is occupied by the Turkish troops since the invasion in 1974. The

Republic of Cyprus has the effective control only of the southern part of the island, comprising about 66% of the island's area. The population of Cyprus is 793,100, of whom 80.7% are Greek Cypriots (including Armenians, Maronites and Latins); 87,600 (11.0%) are Turkish Cypriots; and 66,000 (8.3%) foreigners residing in Cyprus.

The total area of the island is 3,572 square miles, and the main language is Greek, although English is very well spoken. The number of properties in the government-controlled area is about 1.2 million, of which 600,000 are residential buildings; 100,000 are commercial; and the remaining is vacant and woodland.

At this stage I am in Colorado following the course in Fundamentals of Modeling with SPSS, as mentioned above. I am really enjoying this course because it is specific to what I was looking for. Thanks for your support. ❖

TEAM's AAS Case Study Review

Congratulations to new AAS designees:

• **Brent Balduf, RES, AAS**, Deputy Assessor for Story County, Iowa
• **Libby K. Fink, RES, AAS**, Real Estate Appraiser III for Davidson County, NC
• **Clayton Rogers, AAS**, Commercial Analyst III for Harris County, Texas
•**Jerry Ward, RES, AAS**, Appraisal and Revaluation Manager for Davidson County, NC

These new designees bring the total to 24 successful AAS candidates who have used the TEAM AAS Case Study Review. The workshop provides a review of materials and an understanding of the composition of a case study to help prepare for the AAS Case Study Exam. It emphasizes the most prevalent items to study for, although it cannot be all-inclusive of what may actually be on the exam. Topics include: USPAP, rates and levies, effective tax rates, economic principles, property definitions, ownership and rights, three approaches to value, attributes in an effective tax system, role of

I would highly recommend the AAS Case Study Review Course for anyone preparing for the AAS Case Study. Well-written material and excellent instruction from Rick Stuart will give the candidate a great foundation for passing the exam. I found the course to be very helpful.

—Brent Balduf RES, AAS
Deputy Assessor, Story County, Iowa

the assessor, ratio studies, and tax policy. Included are multiple problems associated with the assessment and valuation processes, and the workshop concludes with a four-hour case study exam followed by a review of the answers.

This is not an IAAO workshop but one developed by TEAM Consulting, LLC. To set-up the workshop, contact Rick Stuart at rstuart17@cox.net or call 785.259.1379 . You can also order the complete workshop as a self-study guide by going to: http://www.teamconsulting.cc/images/AAS_Order_Form_2010.pdf ❖

TEAM Workshops Highly Rated

Rick Stuart, CAE, presented several TEAM workshops as part of the assessor's educational meetings conducted by the Idaho State Tax Commission in Boise earlier this year.

■ "How to be a Better Manager," received an overall rating of 4.7 on a scale of 5. Some of the comments included:
• *Useful suggestions*
• *The perspective of being a good manager—sometimes we perceive things differently and need to get on track—nicely done*
• *I enjoyed all aspects—real-life examples were conducive to relating to subject material*
• *Class was awesome—the instruc-*

tor and class participation was great

■ "Valuation of Manufactured Homes." The overall rating was 4.7 on a scale of 5. Comments from the students included:
• Covered all aspects of MH
• Great detail about MH
• Very informative—made us think—presented some new material
• Instructor was very knowledgeable—kept class interesting, good discussion

■ "Valuation of Manufactured Home Park." After this workshop, a field trip to three different quality parks was conducted. The students were divided into teams, reviewed

the parks and then came back to the classroom to discuss quality and condition. This workshop was student-rated at 4.5 out of 5.
• Useable information–pertinent
• Everything—class was great
• Instructor's depth of knowledge, and was able to relate to class in a way we can understand

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Please contact Rick Stuart at rstuart17@cox.net or 785.259.1379 to set up these or other TEAM workshops. Most workshops are available for others to instruct or for purchase by going to http://www.teamconsulting.cc/workshops/selfstudyworkshops.html. ❖

What is TEAM Consulting All About?

TEAM Consulting is a network of experienced "problem solvers" who can offer cost-effective and practical solutions to both large and small assessment jurisdictions. The core of **TEAM Consulting** is our vision, mission and values. These items are the key elements that guide **TEAM** in creating innovative solutions and partnerships that have the potential to change assessment administration and property valuation today and in the future.

Our Vision

TEAM's vision is two-fold. First, our vision for the future of assessment administration and property valuation is to help build systems that are technologically efficient, cost-effective and valuable to the publics who depend on them for information. Secondly, our vision for **TEAM** is to become a recognized leader who can make a difference in assessment administration and property valuation by creating a link to all parties involved in this process. Third, **TEAM** is a strong advocate of education and will create or assist in the creation of specialty designed educational workshops and courses.

Our Mission

"To enable the emergence of a new technology and innovative concepts and ideas to improve the performance of assessment administration and property valuation processes for the benefit of our customers and taxpayers who we all work for."

Our Values

TEAM's values are central to who we are as individuals and as a team. Following are our primary values:

Respect – appreciating and valuing diverse perspectives; building relationships based on trust; and relating to others as individuals, without regard to role, authority, skill, experience or compensation.

Creativity – comes from thinking progressively and being open to the new concepts and ideas that have the potential to work better in the future and bring us closer to our mission.

Performance – takes many forms, but at its essence, this value reflects our desire for achievement, quality, professionalism and success.

Growth – comes out of education, learning from the examples of others and reflecting on our experiences in order to gain insights into how we can improve.

Purpose – knowing why we are doing something, which results in being more effective in our work. When we have purpose for our individual efforts that connects to the purpose of our group and corporate efforts, we have consistency of purpose as an organization.

Service – focusing on others rather than purely on us. Service drives our mission to create something that is of value to others.

Ethics – we subscribe to a code of ethics and the highest standards of our profession.

Check us out at www.teamconsulting.cc